

# Casitas Dam Update

Issue #4

Public Affairs Office  
Bureau of Reclamation  
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**This newsletter is designed to keep neighbors of Casitas Dam informed about construction and related issues. It will be published as needed throughout the project.**

**When you have questions regarding the status of work at the dam, truck traffic, or other concerns, please call the general information line: 805/641-9494**

**Visit our  
website at  
[www.casitasdamsafety.net](http://www.casitasdamsafety.net)**

## **Tours Available**

Tours of the dam may be arranged or requested, and interested parties are asked to make reservations by calling the Casitas Dam Information Line at 805/641-9494. Families are welcome.

## **Phase 1 Completed on Casitas Dam Modification**

Thanks to diligent work on the part of Reclamation's crews and our contractor, Barnard Construction, two key features on the Casitas Dam modification are complete: the shear key replacement and the crest widening.

Slightly ahead of schedule in mid-December, the foundation or "shear key" replacement was completed back to the approximate level of the original creek bed. The loose foundation materials which were subject to strength loss during an earthquake have been completely excavated and replaced at the downstream toe of the dam. Shortly thereafter, night shift work stopped on December 17.

Work continued on the crest modification this month. By January 24, the crest, which has grown from 40 feet wide to 110 feet, was substantially complete. Last month, a specialized reinforcement material, a plastic mesh called geogrid, was installed between the added layers of earthfill during the crest widening. During January, some additional geogrid was installed in the upper 10 feet to complete the crest widening as specified.

Now modification of the outlet works can proceed. The outlet works are at the east end of the dam and contain the valves which release water into pipelines. Over the next few months, the outlet works tunnel and associated pipes will be reinforced to upgrade the system for seismic events.

Currently, the contractor is hauling earth material from the Borrow Area northwest of the reservoir. The material is being used to construct the earthfill berm required immediately above the shear key along the downstream face of the dam. This activity is expected to be completed sometime this summer and will only be performed during a dayshift.

Our thanks and appreciation go to the residents downstream who have patiently endured the noise, "the grizzley", traffic, and other inconveniences over the last few months. Your feedback, as well as your fortitude, have been instrumental in our successful progress on this important dam safety modification. Please continue to let us know when you have questions or concerns.

## More Residents Learn about Emergency Preparedness

Over the last few months, many meetings have been held with school, community, and private groups to discuss the modification project and to learn more about emergency preparedness and evacuation procedures.

For example, the residents of Walnut Tree mobile home park attended an informal outdoor meeting. In a circle of lawn chairs, neighbors and friends welcomed Bureau of Reclamation project manager Bill Pennington with refreshments of pumpkin pie and coffee. Bill discussed the construction project and the need to be prepared in case of a flood emergency.

The Vista del Monte and Westside Adult Center groups were addressed by Mike Lavery, Assistant Fire Chief for the City of Ventura. The participants heard updates on the progress of the project, and on the early warning system, and received information on emergency preparedness.

Everyone received a "Grab & Go" backpack to use for their emergency supplies and a whistle bearing the information line telephone number. The whistles are for emergency use to attract attention or alert to danger.



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## Siren Testing to Continue

The emergency siren system for Casitas Dam will continue to be tested on a regular basis. Most testing of the system will be silent, but audible testing will be conducted on a quarterly basis.

The next audible test for the system will be held on Saturday, January 29, 2000, at 6:00 PM. This weekend evening test was requested by the Westside Community Council to assure that residents normally out of the area during working hours become familiar with the siren alert. The test will be closely monitored by representatives of the City and County of Ventura as well as the Bureau of Reclamation to assess system performance.

Future audible siren tests, conducted in both English and Spanish, will run at noon on the first Wednesday of April, July, and October.

## Night Shift is Over!

Night shift work at the dam is finally over, and we would like to thank the residents in the area immediately below the dam for being so patient with us. Now everybody can get a good night's sleep, safe and sound.

No more nighttime construction or weekend work is planned on the project. The truck hauling along Casitas Vista Road will continue, but only during the daylight working hours during the week.



## Phase II Ready to Begin

Beginning this month, 2 million yards of soil are being dumped at the base of the dam to create a berm. The berm is a strengthening feature, like a doorstep which is propped up against the dam to prevent it from slipping. Later this year, work will begin on the restoration of the environment that was disturbed during the project.

## Would you like to host a meeting?

We are continuing our public outreach activities into the new year. If you would like to host a meeting for your neighbors, friends, employees, or residents, please contact us on the information line at 805/ 641-9494. We will be happy to help you arrange it. We will coordinate the speakers, materials, and formula for a successful meeting. Wednesdays are typically best, and we can conduct the meeting in the morning, afternoon, or evening. Topics focus on emergency preparedness and what's happening at the dam.

## Emergency Preparedness for Pets

Emergency preparedness is vital to all members of your family. Grandma and Grandpa, brother, sister, mom, and dad are all very dear to us, and we want to make sure they are safe from harm in the event of an emergency. But some other members of the family who are dear to us are our beloved pets. Our dogs, cats, fish, birds, pigs, horses, ferrets, bunnies, and other pets have always been there for us when we needed them, and it is our responsibility to make sure that they are as safe during emergencies as the rest of the family. Be sure, for example, that your dog or cat has a contact phone number on its collar tag.

**Ready Freddy says:**

**DON'T BE SCARED,  
*BE PREPARED!***



**Got your Grab & Go Kit yet?**

**It is essential in any emergency situation!**

Grab & Go Kit Tip: Ready Freddy suggests that you have flashlights in your kits, and that you change batteries periodically. His recommendation is to change them every 3 ½ dog years (that's 6 months to you and me). He also suggests you should change the batteries in your flashlights and smoke detectors when the time changes in late April and again in late October.

For more information and to get your  
Grab & Go Starter Kit call  
the Casitas Dam Information Line at 805/641-9494  
or visit us on the Internet at  
[www.casitasdamsafety.net](http://www.casitasdamsafety.net)